



NYCDOE

Quality Review: Final Report

The New York City Department of Education



Quality Review Report

The Aerospace and Science Academy

Public School 127

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Queens
NY 11369**

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Part 1: The school context

Information about the school

The Aerospace and Science Academy is a pre-kindergarten to 8th grade school. Its 1,040 students are 60% Hispanic, 29% Black, 9% Asian and 3% White. Approximately 27% are English language learners, predominantly from Spanish speaking homes. Special education students make up less than 5% of the population. About 92% of the students are Title 1 eligible, significantly higher than the average for City schools and similar schools. Attendance at the school is 94%, higher than similar and City schools.

Part 2: Overview

What the school does well

- The new principal, supported by a strong cabinet, is hard working and a strong instructional leader.
- Students have demonstrated significant academic growth in literacy and mathematics in the last few years.
- Interventions are strategic and have a positive impact on achievement and social development.
- English as a second language strategies are integrated in the instructional practices and professional development of every grade.
- The school has a successful approach to middle school issues that are addressed through such initiatives as forming gender-based classes and adolescent counseling.
- The leaders of the school hold themselves, staff members and students accountable for learning and academic achievement.
- The school has implemented strong enrichment programs and hands-on classroom activities.
- There is a strong parental involvement program.
- The school is clean, safe and conducive to learning.

What the school needs to improve

- Increase teachers' competency in using data to improve student performance.
- Continue to expand the use of student work portfolios as an assessment tool.
- Embed more time in the daily schedule for differentiated professional development so that teachers may reflect, self evaluate and evaluate the practices of their colleagues.
- Improve monitoring and evaluation of progress with clear periodic checkpoints at all levels across the school.
- Make systemic the participation and ownership of school plans and goals by the wider school community.

Part 3: Main findings

Overall Evaluation

This is a proficient school.

The Aerospace and Science Academy is a school that is fairing well in spite of the changes due to the reorganization of the Department of Education and its own status as a magnet school. The school is now a zoned school drawing students from the local community, and consequently more of the students are English language learners. The principal, who has been in office less than two years, has steered the school through its current changes. She has nurtured a number of organizational initiatives put in place as she assumed control with a well considered plan to further improve the achievement at the school. Academic gains have been sustained at reasonably high levels over the last few years. There are now sound accountability systems in place that move the school forward. Although teachers are at various stages of competence using data to drive planning, monitoring and instruction, the school is proficient in most of its practices and exemplary in some others.

How well the school meets New York City's evaluation criteria

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The school does a proficient job at collecting, analyzing and monitoring formal sources of student data. The staff combines these with a range of good school-generated data to paint a useful picture of what the students can do and need to improve.

Teachers regularly conference with students, log running records and examine student work to assess performance. The school is proficient at generating data to provide an understanding of the performance and progress of its special education students and has developed a particular focus on its growing English language learner population. There is at least one English as a second language class in each grade and instructional strategies for English language learners are integrated across the grades.

The school pays good attention to all categories of interest to the school and the impact is demonstrated by good achievement in all content areas. Variations in performance are closely analyzed to identify patterns and trends. Each teacher maintains a data notebook that contains the documentation and analysis of assessments for each student in that teacher's class. School leaders carefully scrutinize data to clearly identify all categories of interest to the school and to monitor and evaluate comparative performance.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student’s next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student’s learning.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

In a short few years, the staff has learned to use relevant data in a more timely and accurate manner to drive planning and monitoring of progress and performance. Teachers plan collaboratively in team meetings. Most staff can clearly explain how data drives their planning and instruction. Overall, teachers are proficient at self-managing the newly established procedures for accountability and setting short-term and long-term goals for achievement with appropriate timeframes throughout the school year. Although fairly new, this administration understands the importance of developing plans and goals as a school and also working with teachers to take responsibility for the academic improvement of each child in the school.

The group of students in most need of improvement changes frequently in response to data analysis. The school has become proficient at developing systems to involve students and parents in setting goals for improvement. The staff is learning how to use successes and achievements to celebrate and raise expectations for further improvement.

The school has begun to move forward and realize the aim of including all members of the school community as partners.

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity and resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.

This area of the school’s work is proficient.

The school does a proficient job at following a core curriculum and modifying it with pacing calendars, curriculum maps and other activities to make lessons more engaging. Teachers are now sharing strategies for adjusting curriculum for groups and individuals in response to needs identified through the analysis of data. Most teachers can articulate how they are held accountable for improving instruction and outcomes. The administration has put new systems in place to identify responsibility. It is now a normal and expected practice for teachers to differentiate their instruction in response to the specific needs of their students.

School leaders are more proficient at using the budget and scheduling in ways that have a positive impact on student progress. The school is well developed in how it makes staffing decisions based on the needs revealed by student data and the school’s focused plans for improvement. More English as a second language and academic intervention personnel have been hired and assigned responsibilities that have a positive impact on achievement. In addition, the roles of the literacy and mathematics coaches have been strengthened and expanded to better support teachers and instruction.

Most instructional programs actively engage students. Efforts are under way to make learning more engaging by providing more enrichment activities. Rooms are allocated for music, art and science. Three classrooms have been designated as science rooms providing lab activities for all students across the grades. The staff is well developed in its caring and respect for students. Relationships are excellent between adults and students. In addition, positive strategies are in place throughout the school to encourage and reward good attendance. Classes with the best attendance receive validation and attend special enrichment activities. Attendance is higher than at similar and City schools.

Quality Statement 4 - Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

The new administration has made a commitment to hiring staff with the capacity to use data to drive planning, instruction and the monitoring of progress. This effort is demonstrating improvement in teacher practices and student outcomes. Professional development is differentiated for new and current staff in order to increase confidence and competence using data to improve student performance. A teachers' center is located on site where appropriate personnel spend time discussing, observing and replicating best practices that are moving the school forward. Training is now focused on providing staff, many of whom are at different levels, with the skills needed to fully achieve the school's goals and targets. Teachers understand the importance of self evaluation and peer evaluation and are becoming adept at these practices.

The principal meets with each and every teacher and has a plan for improving quality. She and the assistant principals use formal and informal classroom observations to provide constructive feedback and set topics for professional development. New processes have been put in place to provide regular opportunities for close collaboration and planning within grades, subjects and across the school. Common planning time is provided for teachers on a weekly basis.

The principal has demonstrated significant capacity to effect change and manage the improvement process. The school runs smoothly while procedures are clearly communicated and followed by all. Youth development and support services are proficiently organized around stated academic goals and continue to improve. Most partnerships with outside organizations are aligned with the school's plans for improvement. The school is proficient at using outside partnerships routinely to achieve academic goals.

Quality Statement 5 - Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerated learning.

This area of the school's work is proficient.

In a short time, this fairly new administration has made the school proficient in its accountability practices and has a strategy for continuing to improve them. Plans and goals have been established for the whole school and are appropriately shared with all the members of the school community. Teachers have learned to use interim goals and

assessments to measure the progress of students throughout the school year more effectively and are striving to become more rigorous in the practice.

Comparisons of student progress are being made within and across classrooms. Some teachers do this better than others and procedures have been put in place to enhance this process systematically.

The school is becoming stronger at using its understanding of its strengths and weaknesses to prioritize its goals for improvement and modifying goals immediately when data reveals that it is necessary in order to reach stated goals. The Comprehensive Education Plan is an important document that staff has learned to use to monitor its progress with established checkpoints and timelines.

All members of the school community, although not there yet, are working to take ownership of school plans and goals. The school has become proficient at making its evaluation of goals and plans an integral part of the next school planning cycle.

Part 4: School Quality Criteria Summary

SCHOOL NAME The Aerospace and Science Academy (PS 127)	∅	✓	+
Quality Score		X	

Quality Statement 1 – Gather Data: School leaders and faculty consistently gather data and use it to understand what each student knows and is able to do and to monitor student progress over time.	∅	✓	+
1.1 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • each student, classroom, grade level, 		X	
1.2 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ethnic groups, English Language Learners, special education students* 		X	
1.3 The school uses available data and generates its own data to provide an objective, constantly updated understanding of the performance and progress of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all other categories of interest to the school* 		X	
1.4 Performance and progress are measured based on comparisons with similar schools, with the school's own past performance, and among students, classrooms, grade levels, academic subject areas, ethnic groups, and other groupings of interest within the school.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 1		X	

* These criteria are partially aspirational as of now because schools do not have routine access to all of this data. The NYC DOE plans to provide schools with enhanced access to the necessary data in 2007.

Quality Statement 2 – Plan and Set Goals: School leaders and faculty consistently use available data to understand each student's next learning step. Through collaborative planning and student and parent engagement, they set high goals for improving teaching practice and accelerating each student's learning.	∅	✓	+
2.1 Using data, school leaders and faculty engage in a collaborative process to set demanding, objectively measurable goals for immediate and long-range improvement, and to develop plans and timeframes for reaching those goals.		X	
2.2 Goals and plans focus on the school as a whole and on each student, classroom, grade level, academic subject, and group of students whose performance or progress has been identified by the school as a particular focus area.		X	
2.3 Particular attention is given to improving the performance and progress of students in greatest need of improvement.			X
2.4 High expectations are conveyed to students and parents/caregivers. Students and their parents/caregivers are regularly invited to provide information about each student's performance and how to improve. This information is central to setting challenging goals and developing, evaluating, and revising plans.		X	
2.5 Goals and plans for improving student performance and progress drive the activity of all members of the school community: leaders, staff, students, parents, and other partners.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 2		X	

Quality Statement 3 – Align Instruction: The school aligns its instructional activity, resources, and student engagement around its focused plans for accelerating learning for each student.	Ø	✓	+
3.1 The school selects the curriculum based on how well it aligns with or implements the mandated curriculum and on the curriculum's capacity to generate meaningful interim data about progress towards goals and to support the school's high expectations and improvement plans.		X	
3.2 Teachers are accountable for improving instruction and student outcomes. They plan and differentiate their instruction based on the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.3 Budgeting decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.		X	
3.4 Staffing decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes.			X
3.5 Scheduling decisions about the use of teacher and student time are guided by the needs that emerge from examining student data and by the focused plan the school develops to improve student outcomes.		X	
3.6 Instructional programs actively engage students.		X	
3.7 Staff know and respect students and respond to their academic needs, as well as their personal needs that affect academic performance. Each student knows and trusts an adult on the staff who is concerned about him or her.			X
3.8 Student attendance and engagement are high priorities. High rates and patterns of absences trigger immediate intervention.			X
Overall score for Quality Statement 3		X	
Quality Statement 4 – Build and Align Capacity: The development of instructional leadership, staff, and capacity are aligned around the school's collaboratively established goals for accelerating the learning of each student.	Ø	✓	+
4.1 Leaders, faculty, and staff are selected based on their high expectations for student performance and progress and based on their commitment and capacity to use data, compare outcomes within and across classrooms and schools and develop and revise plans and methods to improve performance and progress.		X	
4.2 Professional development decisions are driven by the needs revealed by student data and by the focused plan the school has developed to improve each student's and group of students' outcomes. Professional development is designed to help leaders, faculty, and staff use data, self- and peer-assessments, and collaboration with peers to achieve goals for improved school and student outcomes. Professional development and self- and peer-evaluation are aligned and overlap.			X
4.3 The principal frequently observes classroom teaching and has a considered strategy for improving the quality of each teacher's instruction. Teachers frequently observe and support each other's classroom instruction with the goal of improving student outcomes.		X	
4.4 Planning, evaluation of results, and revision of plans takes place in teams. Leaders and faculty inform each other of their goals and results, candidly evaluate themselves and each other, and use what is learned to drive improvement.		X	
4.5 The principal is respected and has capacity to effect change.			X
4.6 The school runs smoothly. Procedures are clear, communicated to all, and are generally followed.			X
4.7 The school aligns youth development and support services around stated academic goals. Partnerships with outside bodies are routinely used to achieve academic goals.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 4		X	
Quality Statement 5 – Monitor and Revise: The school has built-in structures for evaluating each student's progress throughout the year, recognizing weaknesses in its improvement plans and teaching practices, and flexibly adapting plans and practices to meet its goals for accelerating learning.	Ø	✓	+
5.1 All school plans and other interventions include frequent interim goals and diagnostic assessments of progress designed to reveal in objectively measurable ways whether the plan is being effectively implemented and reaching stated goals.		X	
5.2 Comparisons of student progress within and across classrooms and schools are used in making interim diagnostic assessments and measuring the progress of plans and interventions.		X	
5.3 Information generated by periodic assessments and diagnostic measures of progress and comparisons is used to revise plans immediately in order to reach stated goals. Interim and final goals are modified when data objectively demonstrate that revision is required.		X	
5.4 Each plan's interim and final outcomes drive successive phases of goal setting and Improvement planning, and each successive phase is characterized by agile and flexible realignment of practices and resources to improve student academic outcomes.		X	
Overall score for Quality Statement 5		X	